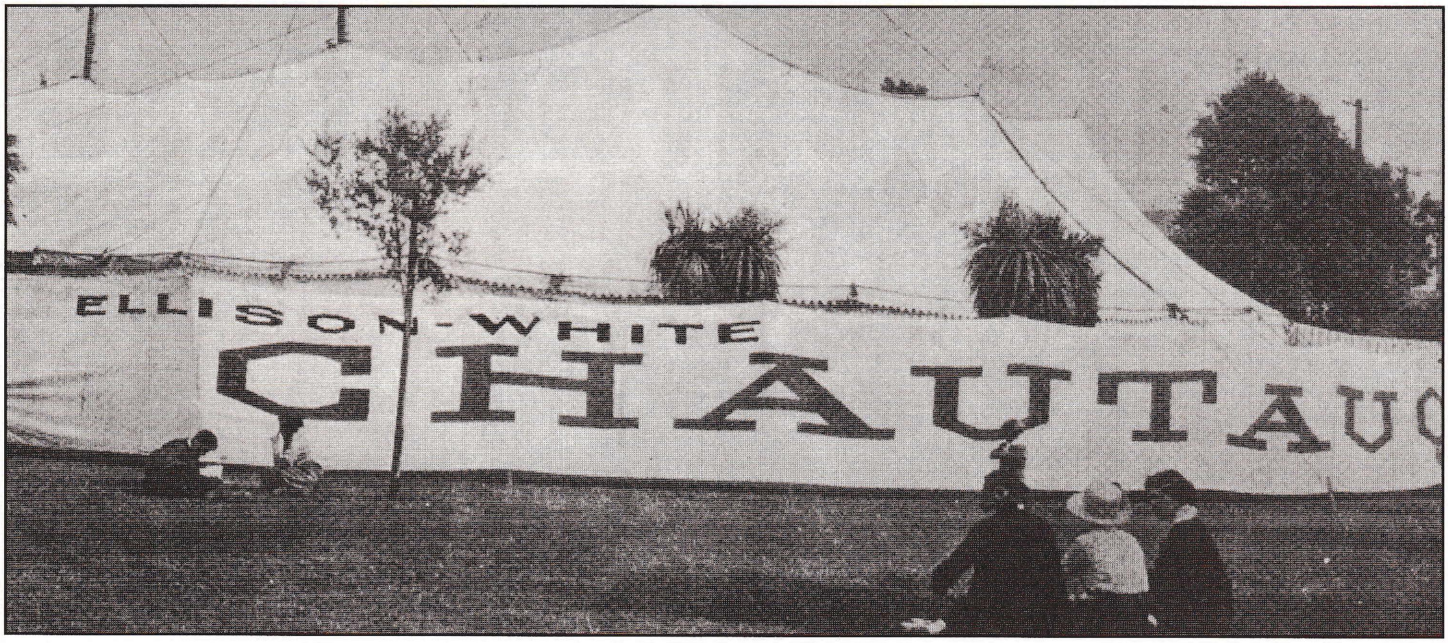
LODI HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Incorporated October 20, 1988

LODI HISTORIAN

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1 SPRING 2002

THE CHAUTAUQUA SYSTEM

by Ralph Lea & Janice Roth



GENERAL INFORMATION

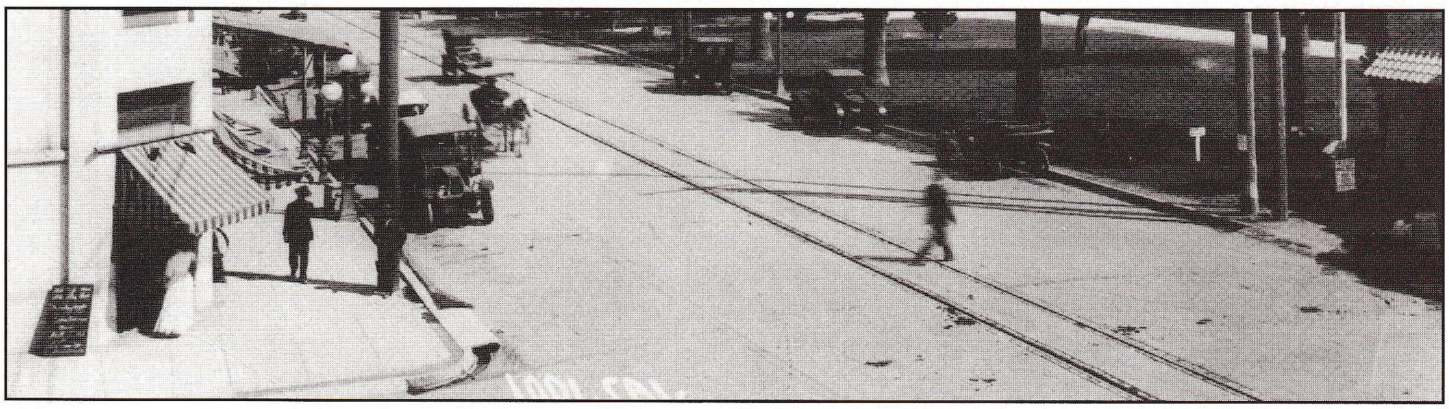
Season Tickets are on sale by the committee until noon of the opening day at $2.50. After that time they advance to $3.00. They are transferable only within the owner's immediate family.

Should You Forget to bring your season ticket, purchase a single admission from the cashier and get a receipt. Bring your season ticket to the next session and hand to the cashier with your receipt. He will then refund to you the amount of your single admission.

Children's Tickets at $1.00 admit children aged six to fourteen years. The tickets admits them to all regular Chautauqua programs as well as the Junior Chautauqua.

Single Admissions to the various sessions amount to approximately three times the cost of a season ticket. Even though you attend but a few numbers, it is economy to buy a season ticket. Children's single admissions approximately half price.

A Limited Number of Reserved Seats will be provided at the nominal charge of 5¢ each.—Season reserve seats, that you may have the same chair held for you the entire week, will be sold at the same rate, 5¢ per session.



▲ *The scene in Lodi, the Southern Pacific Railroad Park on Sacramento Street, around the time of the first Chautauqua event.*

▲ *Cover of an advertising brochure for the Chautauqua in 1924.*

In the late 1800's and early 1900's in the United States there were many very small towns that did not have a wide variety of culture and entertainment. Communication was by word of mouth or the weekly newspaper. Radio, television and the Internet were not on the scene. These outlying areas still craved education, art and culture. In 1876 in the state of New York on the shores of the very pastoral Lake Chautauqua a movement was born to help alleviate this situation. It was the Chautauqua. The word Chautauqua (pronounced shuh TAW kwuh) was a Seneca Indian word meaning "two moccasins tied together with a string" and later the meaning changed to "a place where people come together to learn and share ideas in a beautiful setting." In the heyday of the movement there were up to12,000 Chautauqua sites. Here in Lodi the tent Chautauquas were in vogue for only a few years. There were traveling groups of Chautauquas that operated from 1903-1930. They moved from town to town, mostly in rural America, giving a program of lectures, concerts and recitals in a large tent.

Lodi was chosen to participate in the Chautauqua System in March of 1913 after Mr. L.V. Stiles completed arrangements representing the Ellison-White Chautauqua System. The System was set up to bring entertainment, enrichment and cultural activities to rural America. (similar to the Community Concerts of today)

Forty Lodi businessmen guaranteed an amount of money to back the Chautauquan effort thereby ensuring the 1913 season in Lodi. In the latter part of May a large freight car brought the huge canvas tents for the Chautauqua performances. Lodi was the first Chautauqua Entertainment System to be opened on the Pacific Coast. On June16th at 2:30 p.m. in one of the large tents set up for the occasion the first West Coast Performance was held in Lodi.

For five consecutive days and nights performances and activities were held for children and grownups alike. The first season's fare in Lodi included organizing the Seton Indian Camp (an activity filled presentation for children), a lecture by Della Crowder Miller on "The Chautauqua," an afternoon recital by the Artists' Trio, another lecture by Miss Belle Kearney entitled "Old Days in Dixie Land," the Artist's Trio performed again in the evening followed by a lecture oration by Senator Elmer J. Burkett of Nebraska titled "The New Woman and the Young Man." Fares of similar nature were held for five consecutive days and evenings in the tent erected for the purpose near the library.

One of the advertisements went into great length praising Lodi almost as a Utopian town, stating, "Lodi is situated in the great San Joaquin Valley of California, on the main line of the Southern Pacific Railroad. It is a beautiful city of 4,000 population. Modern in every respect, it presents a pleasing appearance, with a magnificent stone arch as the entrance to the city. Paved streets lighted with three-cluster electric lamps, substantial business houses, a $150,000 High School, macadamized roads – all these are evidences of prosperity."

It continues, "Lodi is the center of one of the richest farming sections of the state. Flaming Tokay grapes,

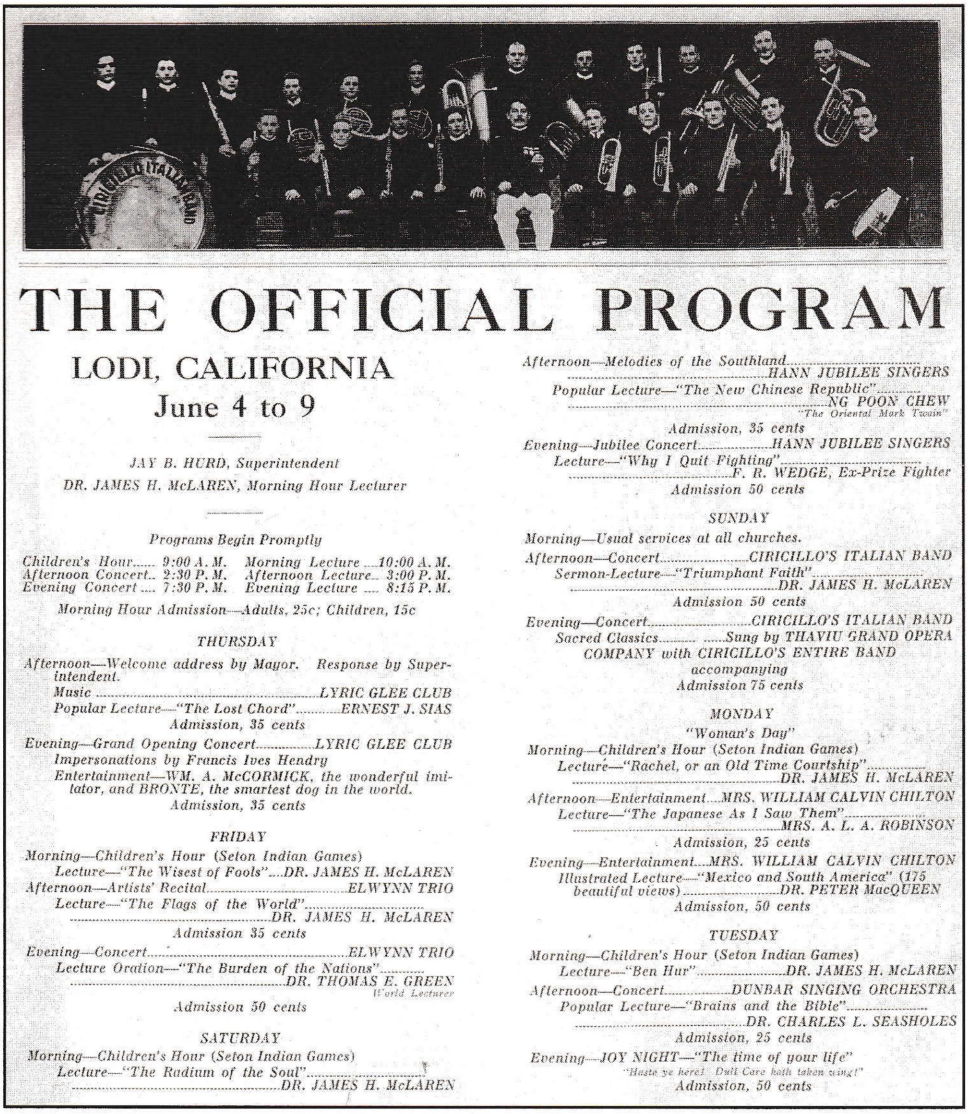
almonds, cherries, peaches, apricots, plums, prunes, olives, berries, alfalfa, all mean wealth to the farmers. Individual pumping plants furnish an inexhaustible supply of water; cultivation and fertilization of soil are carried on according to the latest approved methods."

And still more, "Lodi owns its own water and lighting plants, has a fine Carnegie Library, the best of schools, splendid homes, refined people, religious, social and commercial advantages, and is proud of its splendid newspapers. Climate: On Christmas night a Christmas tree festival was held in the open air. Under the open sky of a million stars the people raised their voices in reverential gladness. All this while less favored sections were in the grasp of the storm king. To see a growing tree, decorated with gayly colored lights used as a Christmas tree, on a carpet of green was surely a testimonial of wonderful climate."

The article concluded with, "This is a city of happy homes and contented people. Every farmer has his library and farm journals and takes an active interest in all activities for the public good. He is interested in the Chautauqua because it brings his children in contact with high class entertainment – a feature too seldom found in smaller communities."

Lodi became the western headquarters for Chautauqua scheduled towns. The eight managers of the western division met in Lodi to plan the programs for their division. All of the talent came to Lodi where the programs and schedules were arranged; props, including the tents, were packaged and performers were assigned. Modesto, Turlock and Watsonville were among some of the 42 towns on the Chautauqua western circuit which also included towns in Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Idaho and Montana.

An article in The Lodi Sentinel on June 3, 1913 gives a thumbnail description of the progress of the event. "Large tents being erected at Locust Street and Pleasant Avenue – Frank Gerhart of Stanford University, who is the advance tent and property man of the Chautauqua Association arrived in Lodi Monday and is making arrangements to set up the tents and provide the necessary equipment. The grounds are the C. L. Van Buskirk property at the corner of Locust Street and Pleasant Avenue. The vacant lots at this particular point will be quite satisfactory, for it is much more centrally located than the old circus grounds, where it was thought the entertainments would have to be held. No time will now be lost in



THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM

LODI, CALIFORNIA

June 4 to 9

JAY B. HURD, Superintendent

DR. JAMES H. McLAREN, Morning Hour Lecturer

Programs Begin Promptly

Children's Hour..... 9:00 A. M. Morning Lecture ....10:00 A. M.
Afternoon Concert.. 2:30 P. M. Afternoon Lecture.. 3:00 P. M.
Evening Concert .... 7:30 P. M. Evening Lecture .... 8:15 P. M.

Morning Hour Admission—Adults, 25c; Children, 15c

THURSDAY

Afternoon—Welcome address by Mayor. Response by Superintendent.
Music .....LYRIC GLEE CLUB
Popular Lecture—"The Lost Chord".....ERNEST J. SIAS
Admission, 35 cents
Evening—Grand Opening Concert.....LYRIC GLEE CLUB
Impersonations by Francis Ives Hendry
Entertainment—WM. A. McCORMICK, the wonderful imitator, and BRONTE, the smartest dog in the world.
Admission, 35 cents

FRIDAY

Morning—Children's Hour (Seton Indian Games)
Lecture—"The Wisest of Fools"....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Afternoon—Artists' Recital.....ELWYNN TRIO
Lecture—"The Flags of the World".....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Admission 35 cents
Evening—Concert.....ELWYNN TRIO
Lecture Oration—"The Burden of the Nations".....DR. THOMAS E. GREEN
World Lecturer
Admission 50 cents

SATURDAY

Morning—Children's Hour (Seton Indian Games)
Lecture—"The Radium of the Soul".....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Afternoon—Melodies of the Southland.....HANN JUBILEE SINGERS
Popular Lecture—"The New Chinese Republic".....NG POON CHEW
"The Oriental Mark Twain"
Admission, 35 cents
Evening—Jubilee Concert.....HANN JUBILEE SINGERS
Lecture—"Why I Quit Fighting".....F. R. WEDGE, Ex-Prize Fighter
Admission 50 cents

SUNDAY

Morning—Usual services at all churches.
Afternoon—Concert.....CIRICILLO'S ITALIAN BAND
Sermon-Lecture—"Triumphant Faith".....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Admission 50 cents
Evening—Concert.....CIRICILLO'S ITALIAN BAND
Sacred Classics..... .....Sung by THAVIU GRAND OPERA COMPANY with CIRICILLO'S ENTIRE BAND accompanying
Admission 75 cents

MONDAY

"Woman's Day"
Morning—Children's Hour (Seton Indian Games)
Lecture—"Rachel, or an Old Time Courtship".....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Afternoon—Entertainment....MRS. WILLIAM CALVIN CHILTON
Lecture—"The Japanese As I Saw Them".....MRS. A. L. A. ROBINSON
Admission, 25 cents
Evening—Entertainment....MRS. WILLIAM CALVIN CHILTON
Illustrated Lecture—"Mexico and South America" (175 beautiful views).....DR. PETER MacQUEEN
Admission, 50 cents

TUESDAY

Morning—Children's Hour (Seton Indian Games)
Lecture—"Ben Hur".....DR. JAMES H. McLAREN
Afternoon—Concert.....DUNBAR SINGING ORCHESTRA
Popular Lecture—"Brains and the Bible".....DR. CHARLES L. SEASHOLES
Admission, 25 cents
Evening—JOY NIGHT—"The time of your life"
"Haste ye here! Dull Care hath taken wing!"
Admission, 50 cents

▲ *The official program of the Chautauqua in 1914.*

THE
LODI CHAUTAUQUA
June 16 to 21

HEAR AND SEE

Abraham Lincoln

As Given By

Ben Chapin

6—Big Days—6

A Season Ticket Admits You to Twenty Attractions

High Grade-Clean-Elevating

Everyone Will Be Proud of Our Chautauqua

Season Tickets $3.00

$2.50 Until Opening Day

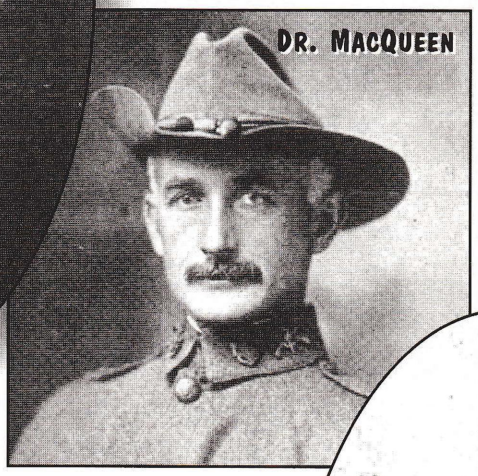
R. S. FULLER, SECRETARY

▲ *Chautauqua ad.*

▲ *Signor Salvatore Ciricillo, conductor of world famous Italian Band.*

ELLISON-WH

CHAUT



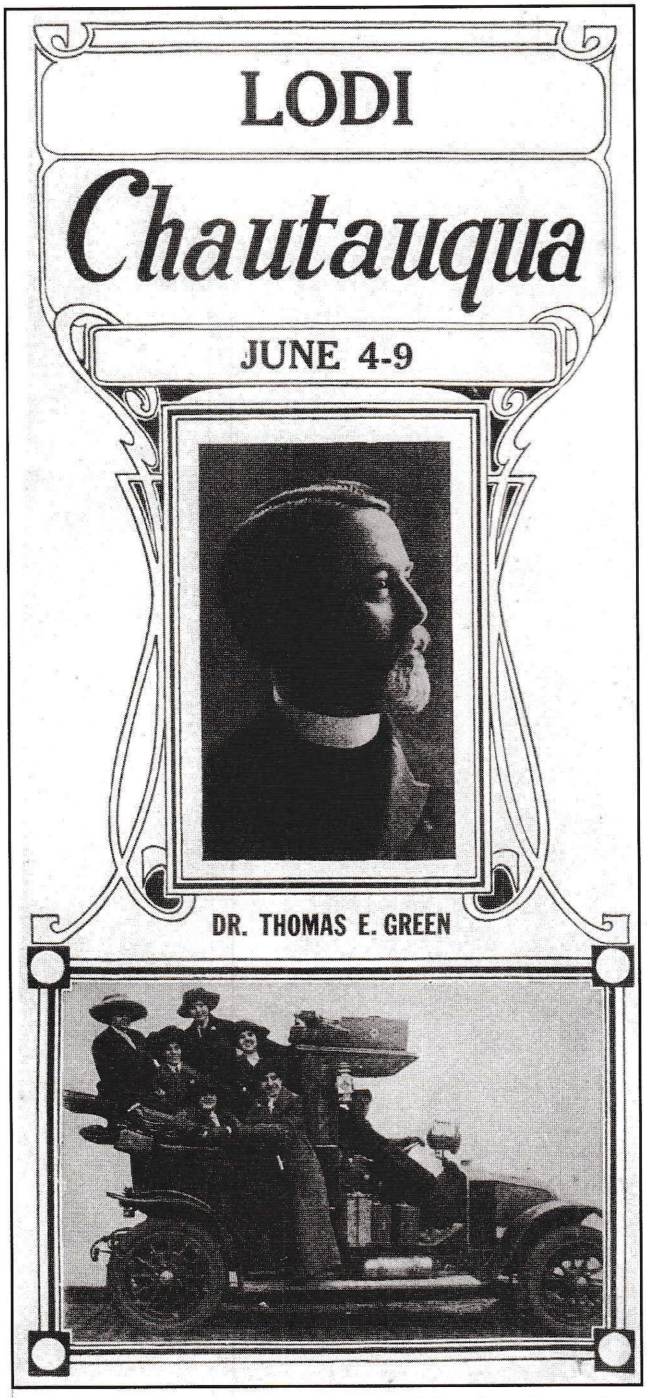
▲ *Mrs. Chilton's repertoire included both humorous and sacred interpretations.*

▲ *Isadore Berger with the Elwynn Trio.*

▲ *Mrs. Robinson, brilliant lecturer on the Christian world.*

▲ *Humorous character study and doubles in Dunbar Singing Orchestra.*

Hann Jubilee Singers, featuring Io M. Browne, Abyssinian Diva, in a range of music from jubilee (plantation) to grand opera selections. ▲



▲ *The Dunbar Singing Orchestra, six young ladies shown here with touring auto.*

putting up the tents. The main tabernacle is 120 by 80 feet in size and there will be a number of smaller tents for equipment, dressing and sleeping quarters. As this is the first Chautauqua held in the State this season, supplies to be used in a series of about 20 cities are being purchased here. Monday morning the advance man purchased more than $600 worth of material from the local stores. A great quantity of bunting for decoration, rope, sleeping cots for the performers and attendants, sleeping tents, a quantity of hardware and other material were all purchased locally. The jacks or forms for the portable seats are all being made in Lodi. A quantity of the lumber will be rented, but the forms will be moved from place to place."

The first Chautauqua in Lodi (and on the Pacific Coast) began on Monday at 2:30 p.m. on June 16, 1913. Tickets for the first Chautauqua in Lodi were available at Zimmerman's Pharmacy for the three weeks prior to the event for $2.50 for the entire week of 16 performances. F.A. Keast, son of Rev. Keast of the Methodist Evangelical Church, was in charge of selling the tickets. After Chautauqua opens the price of season tickets went up to $3.00 with admission to a single event of $.50. Lectures were a part of the week's fare. For one presentation Ben Chapin had been engaged to give his interpretation of Abraham Lincoln in which he speaks for about an hour and a half on the old Civil War days and the troubles that beset a president. Other speakers engaged were Senator Burkett lecturing on "The New Women," Julius Caesar Nayphe, a lecturer from Greece and a graduate of Oxford University spoke on "The Balkan Question" and "The Crescent and the Cross," and Miss Belle Kearney of Mississippi expounded on "Before the War and Up To the Present" taking the Southerner's view.

Lodi was so impressed by the Chautauqua of 1913 that its return in 1914 was guaranteed by the end of the 1913 season. Leading businessmen, merchants and citizens of the area guaranteed the sale of 600 season tickets at $2.50 each.

The Lodi Sentinel of June 21, 1913 told about how the city demanded a city license of $12.50 for operating its "school of learning and amusement" in Lodi. Officials of Chautauqua were peeved at this fee and told city officials that this was the first time it had to pay such a fee. The trustees of Lodi said that they were powerless because it is a city law and this fee must be charged so their hands were tied.

Music was always an important part of the week long Chautauqua program. Well-known musicians such as Alexander von Skibinsky, a Russian concert violinist; Mary Welch, contralto; Alice Wright Baker, pianist; the Thavion Opera Company, and the New York City Band all appeared in Lodi during the 1916 season.

The White City Band of Chicago was one of the main attractions and demonstrated the quality of the performers traveling with the Chautauqua. An article from The Lodi Sentinel of June 10, 1913 states "...Under the efficient leadership of Mr. A.F. Thaviu, this band has held some of the most notable band engagements of recent years, having played at the White City of Chicago, the largest amusement park in the world, for three consecutive seasons. It was also the official band at the Texas State Fair for three years, and this fair is the biggest meeting of its

kind in the South. The Missouri State Fair considered themselves fortunate in securing the band for two seasons. Between these various engagements, many extensive concert tours have been given. They will appear on the Chautauqua for two splendid concerts at no additional cost whatever to regular season ticket holders."

The individual performer did not lack diversity either. One act titled "McCormack and Bronte" had this article written, "Mr. McCormick is one of the platform's greatest imitators of birds and animals and with him is "Bronte," undoubtedly the smartest dog in the world. This is an entertainment you should not miss. It is not a "children's affair," but commands the interest of both adults and children. The entire community will be talking about McCormick and "Bronte" for months, and you'll be sorry if you miss this great entertainment."

The children's program, called the Seton Indian School, stressed getting back to nature. Children learned an appreciation of nature and were encouraged to lead a clean life and to practice doing good for others. Indian and wild animal stories were told. Children learned the names of trees and identified them by their leaves and bark. Indian costumes with beadwork were made along with bows and arrows. On the last day of Chautauqua a pow-wow was held around a totem pole.

The 1915 session of Chautauqua was again a success and the following year's session was guaranteed to return to Lodi when forty-nine local men insured the success of the program. George W. Lemoin, William Inch, Dr. A.M. Tower, Porter S. Gray, John Hieb, Jacob Hieb, R.L. Moore, J.M.. Posey, J.A. Lyons, D.D. Smith, Charles F. Faber, J.C. Keller, George Meissner, R.S. Fuller, J.W. Shattuck, Dan W. Bird, Louis Rinn, John H. Davies, William Faust, John Willms, R.P. Valentine, John C. Bewley, R.J.Custer, Wilson H. Thompson, J.C. Ferguson, C.A. Follendorf, J.C. Burson, A.P. Coral, Dr. D.H.Clouse, Fred G. Lee, M.O.Holt, Henry F. Ellis, A.M.. Jones, Dr.J.M. Gardner, L.S. Channel, Rev. Victor Hovus of the Christian Church, Rev. W.A. Schwimley of the Congregational Church, Rev. F.A. Keast, H.A. Goodman, C.A. Griswold, F.P. Roper, J.L. Pickering, George LeFeber, Dr. W.S. Fogg, Dr. J.G. Priestly, W.B. Ambrose, E.M. Locke, W.S. Montgomery and John B. Cory all signed a guarantee to insure the success of the 1916 Chautauqua in Lodi.

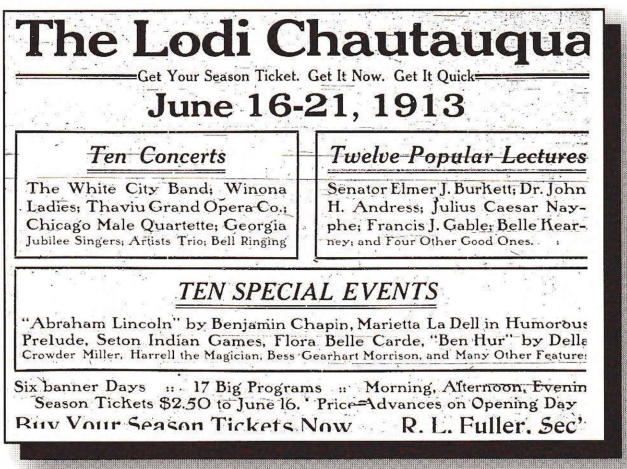
The children evidently learned a great deal and put "into practice" what they learned as evidenced by the following article in the June 12, 1919 issue of The Lodi Sentinel. "Children Raise $1.05 For Lodi Free Clinic — With a desire of doing something for the Lodi free clinic, and aiding little boys and girls who are less fortunate than themselves, a number of kiddies in the neighborhood of F.O. Hale gave a benefit show during Chautauqua week and raised $1.05, which they proudly turned over to the clinic yesterday. They said they could have easily raised $5 had it not been for the fact that so many of the neighboring children regularly attended Chautauqua. Those who took part in the performance were Frances Scott, Vivoline Webb, Valeska Beardsley, Ruth Snyder, Myron Tower, Verle Grey and Bessie Thomas."

▲ *This was an event held once a year for six days and nights which gave the small town family a chance to absorb a little culture.*

Six Chautauquas were in operation at once. One would open in

Ernesto Gioconne, tenor; Emilia Ledvalli, lyric soprano; Ennesto Torti, baritone; and Ann Buck, contralto. ▲

▶ *Boston Light Opera Company; 24 people comprise a full singing cast and orchestra in the comic opera "Chimes of Normandie."*



The Lodi Chautauqua

Get Your Season Ticket. Get It Now. Get It Quick

June 16-21, 1913

Ten Concerts

The White City Band; Winona Ladies; Thaviu Grand Opera Co.; Chicago Male Quartette; Georgia Jubilee Singers; Artists Trio; Bell Ringing

Twelve Popular Lectures

Senator Elmer J. Burkett; Dr. John H. Andress; Julius Caesar Nayphe; Francis J. Gable; Belle Kearney; and Four Other Good Ones.

TEN SPECIAL EVENTS

"Abraham Lincoln" by Benjamin Chapin, Marietta La Dell in Humorous Prelude, Seton Indian Games, Flora Belle Carde, "Ben Hur" by Delle Crowder Miller, Harrell the Magician, Bess Gearhart Morrison, and Many Other Features

Six banner Days :: 17 Big Programs :: Morning, Afternoon, Evenin
Season Tickets $2.50 to June 16. Price Advances on Opening Day
Buy Your Season Tickets Now R. L. Fuller, Sec'

THE LODI HISTORIAN
is a quarterly publication of the Lodi Historical Society
P.O. Box 264, Lodi, CA 95241-0264

**Ralph Lea ..... Editor*
**Lucy Reller ..... Assistant Editor*

LODI HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2002 Board of Directors

Beverly Hoag ..... President
Eric Neff ..... 1st Vice President
Marilyn Morris ..... 2nd Vice President
Pat White ..... Recording Secretary
Leonard Messer ..... Corresponding Secretary
Ruth Brown ..... Treasurer

**Susanne Benbrook, *Ralph Lea, Leonard Messer, *Vesta Mason, *Gladys Mettler, *Walter Scott, Lynn Benbrook, *Nancy Schmer, Bud Sullivan, *Bing Taylor, *Janice Roth and Andrea Songey-Neff.*

HISTORY COMMITTEE
Ralph Lea, Chairman
Lucy Reller, Jean Kettleman, Helen Crittenden, Maxine Kelley, Marjie Poggio, Evelyn Hassbaum and Hugh Metcalf.

**History Committee Member*
All rights to republication are reserved
Permission to quote or use material herein should be obtained in writing

Lodi on Monday, Modesto on Tuesday, Wednesday at Turlock and so on. Each line of entertainment would go from town to town as scheduled. All props and materials for the West Coast production originated from Lodi.

After the popularization of radio and other forms of entertainment the Tent Chautauqua faded, however some of the Chautauqua Camps are still in existence. Boulder, Colorado boasts one of the few remaining cities in the U.S. that still has a Chautauqua Park center.

PUBLISHED WITH A GRANT FROM THE LODI ARTS COMMISSION